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DIAGNOSIS.—Resembles closely *Passerella iliaca megarhyncha* but differs in less robust bill, and slightly paler (ashier) tone of gray on upper surface; differs from *Passerella iliaca schistacea* (as represented by specimens from north-western Nevada), in thicker bill, longer claws, and paler dorsal coloration. (See figs. 54a, b, c, d.)

MATERIAL.—Nine specimens, including the type, from Mono County, California, as follows: from Mono Lake P. O., 6500 feet altitude, 4; from Walker Lake, 8000 feet, 3; from Parker Creek at 7500 and 8600 feet, 2.

REMARKS.—The Mono Fox Sparrow adds another race to the assemblage of pale-colored forms breeding in the western United States. It is not expedient to attempt at this time to determine the range of the new form beyond what is indicated by the few localities given.

Berkeley, California, August 13, 1917.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The Oldest American Ornithologist.—For twenty-two years the record for longevity among American ornithologists has been held by the late George Newbold Lawrence, who was born October 20, 1806, and died January 17, 1895, at the age of 88 years, 2 months and 28 days. This record has now been broken by a well known Californian and one of the honorary members of the Cooper Ornithological Club. On June 12, 1917, Mr. Lyman Belding¹ celebrated his 88th birthday and on September 9 passed the limit reached by Lawrence.

Comparatively few ornithologists have exceeded this age. Dr. Jean Louis Cabanis, editor of the *Journal fur Ornithologie*, died only two weeks before his 90th birthday; Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace lacked two months of 91; Dr. Rudolf Amandus Philippi of Santiago, Chili, almost reached the age of 96; William Bernhard Tegetmeier, the English aviculturist, lived 96 years and two weeks; and Dr. Sven Nilsson, the eminent Swedish ornithologist, held the world's record among ornithologists, having attained the age of nearly 97. Nilsson died November 30, 1883, at the age of 96 years, 8 months and 22 days.

Belding, at the time that he made his first trip to Lower California in 1881, was several years older than Bryant, Gambel, Grayson, Heermann, Kennerly or Suckley were when they died, and when his first book on ornithology appeared, the "Land Birds of the Pacific District", he was older than Bendire, Cassin, Coes, Lesson or Wilson were when they ceased publishing. With his present strong constitution and usual good health there is reason to hope that his span of life may exceed that of any of his ornithological predecessors in other lands.—T. S. PALMER, *Washington, D. C., July 25, 1917.*

A Portable Nest.—Having just concluded a rather interesting observation upon a nest of the House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*) and its owners, it occurred to me that an account of it might prove of more or less interest to readers of THE CONDOR. It happened that a pair of these well known little birds chose as a nesting place a shelf in a lean-to which was being used as a garage. The nest was built during a week's absence of the owners of the lean-to, who found it very much in the way upon their return. Not wishing to see the nest destroyed, as the birds were doing no harm, I decided to try a little experiment, and as carefully as possible I moved the nest three or four feet to one side on to a beam about fifteen inches higher than its former site, and just under the lower end of the roof. The next time I went into the shed the female flew out, exposing an egg to view.

Each day the nest was moved from one to several feet, until it had rested in every available spot in the lean-to, the birds following it wherever it was placed and laying in all six eggs. And these were all successfully hatched out. After the youngsters appeared I continued to move the nest about, the parents following it. One day, however, my partner remained all day in the "garage" working upon the car, and this proved to

¹For a portrait, see THE CONDOR, II, January, 1900, p. 2.

be too much for the birds. They did not seem to mind being moved about continually, but would not tolerate the presence of a man working near them all day, finally deserting the young. I tried to save the little ones by feeding them with bread soaked in milk, but they were too young to live through my rough nursing.

Another pair of House Finches built a nest directly over the entrance to our cabin. As it was apt to be in our way my partner destroyed it. But they were persistent, and tried it again with the same result. They have already built three nests on exactly the same spot and are now working on a fourth, evidently believing in the old saying, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again". Evidently they have taken a strong dislike to my partner and myself, and seem to show their indignation by pecking at the window nearest the entrance whenever either of us is inside.—ERNEST C. MAILLIARD, *Hay Fork, Trinity County, California, June 1, 1917.*

The Black-footed Albatross off the Coast of Washington.—While not by any means wishing to intimate that the following notes constitute a new record for the region, the writer considers that the occurrence of albatrosses of any kind near our shores is possibly a matter of general interest. On May 27, 1917, we were so fortunate as to secure three fine specimens of the Black-footed Albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*) which were collected about eighteen miles southwest of Cape Flattery, Washington. Although not observed in abundance, these birds were frequently seen. They occasionally followed the fishing boats, generally by two's, looking for such scraps of fish as might be thrown overboard. The measurements of the birds were as follows, in inches: Male, length 34.25, extent 84.25; male, length 35.00, extent 86.00; female, length 31.50, extent 77.49. All these specimens are now in the collection of Mr. D. E. Brown, of Seattle, Washington.—E. A. KITCHIN, *Tacoma, Washington, August 1, 1917.*

Nesting of the Wilson Phalarope near Fresno, California.—In THE CONDOR, XVIII, page 196, I recorded the occurrence of *Steganopus tricolor* near Firebaugh and suggested the possibility that the pair encountered might have been breeding or preparing to do so. Since that time persistent inquiry and some little field work have brought to light much additional information and finally resulted in the verification of my suspicion.

On May 25, 1917, I visited a large, overflowed pasture about twelve miles southwest of Fresno and noted several pairs of phalaropes all of which were in the rich breeding plumage and apparently mated. Sometimes, before the birds were seen, I was aware of their presence by their characteristic notes which sound like subdued, grunting quacks, but from the fact that both birds were together I concluded that they had not yet commenced to nest.

The next opportunity to visit this pasture came on June 18, and again I was soon attracted by the Cinnamon Teal-like quacking of a phalarope. This time, however, the bird was alone, and from its large size and bright plumage I assumed it was the female and that her mate was probably occupying a nest nearby. Accordingly I approached slowly, hoping that this bird might give some slight clue as to its whereabouts, and was much pleased to see that, after a short flight, she flew across a small island of about a quarter of an acre in extent and came back to the exact place from which she took flight. Repeating this experiment several times brought exactly the same results.

The island mentioned was covered, for the most part, with a thick growth of Bermuda grass, so, after blocking it off into several imaginary sections, I began a systematic search and in less than fifteen minutes a phalarope fluttered from its nest and with all the feigned injury of a brooding dove limped away to join its mate. Immediately I concealed myself as best I could and remained quiet. After numerous slow flights around the island the pair finally settled down at the water's edge and the smaller and less brilliantly plumaged of the two came sneaking through the grass from behind, walked directly past me at a distance of not to exceed ten feet and took its place on the nest.

It seemed desirable to make sure that the question of identification might never arise in this case so I threw a clod toward the nest, causing the sitting bird to spring into the air and fly to the water's edge some fifteen feet away where he plowed along with feathers ruffled, grunting and puffing like an angry coot. The four eggs rested in a slight depression in the ground, lined with dry grass stems. Incubation had advanced to feathered embryos. Upon dissection the brooding bird proved to be the male. Another

er female was encountered the same day under precisely the same conditions, but I had no time for an extended search and a superficial examination of the nearby territory failed to reveal her mate or the nest.

The finding of this nest, together with the fact that mated pairs of birds in breeding condition and plumage are present throughout the summer, fully warrants the assertion that the Wilson Phalarope nests regularly, in small numbers, in the grassy tracts surrounding certain shallow overflowed areas in Fresno and Madera counties and probably in Merced County also.—JOHN G. TYLER, *Fresno, California, June 20, 1917.*

Stomach Contents of an Oregon Ruffed Grouse.—The Oregon Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus sabini*) is a rare game bird in California. So little is known of its habits in this state, or of its food, that an enumeration of the results of the stomach examination of a specimen obtained by H. S. Prescott at Requa, Del Norte County, California, January 14, 1916, seems worth while. Identification of the seeds and leaves was made by Miss Anna M. Lute of the United States Department of Agriculture. The crop and stomach contained: Berries and seeds of madroña (*Arbutus menziesii*); leaves of thimble berry (*Rubus parviflorus*); stems and leaves of dogwood (*Cornus*); unidentified pieces of stem.—HAROLD C. BRYANT, *Berkeley, California, June 20, 1917.*

An Early Experiment in Keeping Hummingbirds in Captivity.—It is not generally known that one of the first experiments in keeping hummingbirds in captivity and shipping them to Europe was made in San Francisco, in pioneer days, by Adolphe Boucard, the well known French ornithologist and authority on the Trochilidae. Boucard reached San Francisco August 16, 1851, and remained until August 18, 1852, when he returned to France via Nicaragua and New York. In his "Travels of a Naturalist" (p. 49) he describes his experiment as follows:

"From March to August [1852], I collected specimens of Natural History. Many were the species of beetles and butterflies that I collected in the suburbs of San Francisco. . . . I also collected many species of birds, and more particularly Hummingbirds. Two species were abundant, *Calypte annae* and *Selasphorus rufus*. I found many nests of these two species during the months of March and April, and at one time I had as many as sixty of them alive, all taken from the nests. I fed them with fresh flowers and small insects. Some of them lived four months. At first I had them all together in a large cage, made on purpose, but as soon as they were grown up, they began to fight so much that I was obliged to put them in separate cages. I put one pair in each, and I succeeded in keeping them alive and well for a long time. My intention was to send them alive to Europe, but even the most robust died at sea, and it was a complete failure.

"Nevertheless, I think if the same experiment was repeated in Florida, New Orleans, or New York, with *Trochilus colubris* there are many probabilities that they would arrive alive in Europe; but of course they could not live long there. Since 1852, I think one experiment of that sort has been made with the Columbian species, and many of them arrived safely in Paris; but they died soon after their arrival. There is more chance with the northern species."

Half a century later five species of hummingbirds were successfully carried from Venezuela to England¹. These birds were received by the Zoological Society of London, May 27, 1907. About 50 birds were captured of which 35 were shipped and 20 reached their destination alive. But there is a great difference between shipping hummingbirds to Europe from California via the Isthmus in 1852 and shipping them direct from Venezuela in 1907 with all the conveniences on modern, fast steamers, and it is not surprising that the first attempt resulted in failure.—T. S. PALMER, *Washington, D. C., July 7, 1917.*

Notes From the Southern Sierras.—In company with Mr. A. W. Hanaford I spent from June 16 to June 26, 1917, at various points in the San Bernardino and Sierra Madre mountains. The following notes do not cover all the species of birds noted, but only some of the more interesting ones.

Porzana carolina. Sora Rail. One bird flushed from the pasture at the east end of Bear Lake, altitude 6760 feet, on June 18. Possibly breeding, although we did not locate a nest.

¹Published in London in 1894; originally appeared in parts in the numbers of "The Hummingbird", III and IV, 1893-1894.

²*Bird Notes*, vi, 1907, p. 102.

Oreortyx picta plumifera. Plumed Quail. We noted this species in numbers between Clark's and Seven Oaks, elevation about 5000 feet. No eggs were found, but coveys of young were frequently met with in the brush. The old birds called the chicks with a note remarkably like the snarling of a wildcat, which somewhat disconcerted us at first.

Xenopicus albolarvatus gravirostris. Southern White-headed Woodpecker. Fawn-skin Valley, elevation 7000 feet, was the only locality where we found this bird to be abundant. Four nests were examined, three of them containing large young. From the other nest I collected three considerably incubated eggs on June 17. This seems to be a rather late set.

Chordeiles virginianus hesperis. Pacific Nighthawk. On the 19th I collected a set of two fresh eggs near Pine Knot, elevation 6800 feet, and not over 200 yards from the edge of Bear Lake. At Clark's Ranch, 5000 feet, nighthawks were seen and heard every evening of the three days we stayed there.

Aeronautes melanoleucus. White-throated Swift. Several colonies were noted in the San Gabriel Canyon at from 2000 to 3000 feet altitude. One nest that I examined June 24 contained four young nearly fully-fledged.

Stellula calliope. Calliope Hummingbird. Although birds were quite common at several points near Bear Lake, we located but one nest of this species. It was inaccessible situated on a dead limb of a large pine tree on Grout Creek, at about 7000 feet altitude.

Sayornis nigricans. Black Phoebe. Common along all streams up to about 6000 feet. We took a set of four half-incubated eggs at Clark's, 5000 feet, on June 21. A similar set was noted near the in-take in San Gabriel Canyon, June 23.

Myiochanes richardsoni richardsoni. Western Wood Pewee. The commonest breeder everywhere. A set of three far-incubated eggs taken June 18 at 7000 feet, and many other nests noted at lower altitudes.

Empidonax difficilis difficilis. Western Flycatcher. A set of three fresh eggs collected with the parent June 21 at 5000 feet in the Santa Ana Canyon. This was our only record of this bird.

Otocoris alpestris actia. California Horned Lark. One pair noted at the I. S. Ranch, elevation 6800 feet. Their actions plainly showed that they had a nest in the vicinity, but I was unable through lack of time to locate it.

Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis. Blue-fronted Jay. Families of young Jays were on the wing at several localities, so a set of three almost fresh eggs that I collected June 18 on Grout Creek, 7000 feet, must be considered as an extremely late laying.

Junco hyemalis thurberi. Thurber Junco. June 19 I collected a set of four fresh eggs near Pine Knot, 6800 feet. The nest was unusual, being placed in an old tin can under a tree some dozen feet from the main road.

Pipilo maculatus megalonyx. Spurred Towhee. Four fresh eggs collected June 20 near Seven Oaks, 5500 feet. Much more common at lower elevations.

Vireosylva gilva swainsoni. Western Warbling Vireo. A characteristic bird of the canyons from 2000 to 5000 feet. A set of four half-incubated eggs taken with the parent birds just below Clark's June 20. On the 23rd I noted a bird brooding one heavily incubated egg in San Gabriel Canyon, 2500 feet elevation. I was unable to determine if there had been more than the one egg.

Dendroica aestiva brewsteri. California Yellow Warbler. Very common up to 5000 feet. A set of four slightly incubated eggs collected at Clark's, June 21, and another set of three fresh eggs taken at 2500 feet in San Gabriel Canyon. All other nests noted were unfinished.

Cinclus mexicanus unicolor. Dipper. Fairly common along the Santa Ana Canyon. A nest was found on a large log in the stream at about 4500 feet. The young had recently flown, and were still in the vicinity. One of them, when forced into the water, swam quite awkwardly and made haste to scramble back to the rocks.

Sialia mexicana anabelae. San Pedro Bluebird. Nesting commonly around Bear Lake, elevation 6760 feet. Many nests noted containing young, and one set of six eggs ready to hatch collected June 17. No Bluebirds were shot by us, and I am referring the birds noted to the subspecies *anabelae* on the authority of Willett's "Birds of the Pacific Slope of Southern California", *Avifauna* no. 7.—D. I. SHEPARDSON, *Los Angeles, California, June 30, 1917*.

Nesting of the California Brown Towhee in San Francisco.—The limitation of the range of the California Brown Towhee (*Pipilo crissalis crissalis*) in the San Francisco Bay region is, I think, most remarkable. This bird is comparatively common not only on the Marin and Alameda shores but also some ten or fifteen miles down the peninsula on which San Francisco is situated, yet within the city itself and the directly adjacent countryside, comprising low-lying hills, brushy canyons, farms, parks and gardens, affording identical climatic conditions together with similarity of food, shelter and nesting facilities, pipilo is, or has been in the past, entirely absent. It was therefore with great surprise not unmixed with doubt as to its authenticity that I read in THE CONDOR for November, 1916, the article by Milton S. Ray, in which he stated that a nest containing four eggs had been found in the spring of 1916 by one of the park game wardens. I wrote to Mr. Ray at the time questioning Mr. Klapp's identification, the error of which that gentleman later admitted by his renunciation of the record.

On May 4, 1917, while walking in Golden Gate Park, I was able to approach and positively identify, much to my astonishment, one of these disputed birds. It disappeared, but later investigation disclosed that it was still in the vicinity, having evidently been attracted by a caged towhee in the aviary, the imprisoned bird making frantic efforts to escape and the one in the open endeavoring no less vigorously to enter. Whether the captive had originally been caged by the park authorities (I had never previously observed it) and had allured the passing wild bird from without, or whether it had voluntarily entered by the same aperture through which it subsequently escaped, is not known. Suffice that within the following week both birds were at liberty among the trees.

It was not, however, until July 1 that the nest was discovered, situated about twelve feet up in an impenetrable tangle of brush, and presumably at that date containing a complete set, as the head of the brooding bird could be plainly seen. Because of their extreme rarity in the locality the birds and nest were allowed to remain undisturbed. Can anyone suggest a reason why this species, so abundant on adjacent shores, has until recently remained a stranger to the metropolis? The problem is an interesting one.—GEORGE W. SCHUSSLER, *San Francisco, California, July 4, 1917.*

Some Further Notes on San Francisco County Birds.—In the excellent article by Messrs. Squires and Hansen on San Francisco birdlife I note that two records by Mr. Jesse Klapp incorporated in my article are questioned. I may state I admitted these on the statement by Mr. Klapp that he had been afield with Dr. H. C. Bryant of the University of California and was well acquainted with the birdlife in Golden Gate Park. (Numbers following refer to those in my two lists.)

76. *Tyrannus verticalis*. Western Kingbird. It appears Mr. Klapp was mistaken in his bird and this should stand on my list thus:

76. *Nuttallornis borealis*. Olive-sided Flycatcher. Disregarding Klapp's record altogether I can definitely record this personally, as a bird flew into our garden (near Suto Forest) on the morning of May 21, 1917. Carriger also informs me he overlooked contributing this species to my list as he has noted it in the county on a number of occasions during the summer months.

86. *Pipilo crissalis crissalis*. California Brown Towhee. Whether Mr. Klapp did or did not find a nest of this species now matters little, as Mr. Geo. W. Schussler telephoned me he had observed the bird in Golden Gate Park on May 20, 1917, and other dates, and since then Mr. Henry W. Carriger informs me Mr. Schussler has found it nesting.

5. *Elanus leucurus*. White-tailed Kite. Undoubtedly the most important recent find for the county was the locating of a nest of this bird in the Lake Merced region by Mr. Henry W. Carriger. As this, I believe, will be treated in an extended article by Messrs. Squires and Hansen I omit further reference, only stating that on the morning of June 5 (1917) as Carriger and I approached the above nest the young birds were just leaving in their initial flight. Since I first recorded this species for the county, in May, 1900, including the above pair I have seen in all but five individuals here and their nesting is surely of exceptional interest.

28. *Zonotrichia leucophrys nuttalli*. Nuttall Sparrow. Carriger and I collected an unusual set of four well-incubated eggs at Lake Merced on June 5, 1917. They are of characteristic coloration but are remarkable for their small size, measuring in inches only .74x.55, .75x.56, .76x.55, .76x.56.

38. *Wilsonia pusilla chryseola*. Golden Pileolated Warbler. Carriger and I located a nest of this bird at Lake Merced on June 5, 1917, placed on the ground amid weeds and vines at the foot of a large pine. It held three small young.—MILTON S. RAY, *San Francisco, California, July 11, 1917.*